

**Report of the  
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Mountain Crest High School**  
**255 South 800 East**  
**Hyrum, Utah 84319**

**March 29-30, 2005**



Utah State Office of Education  
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**THE REPORT OF THE  
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

**Mountain Crest High School**

**255 South 800 East  
Hyrum, Utah 84319**

**March 29-30, 2005**

**UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION**

**Patti Harrington, Ed.D.  
State Superintendent of Public Instruction**

**DIVISION OF  
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## **FOREWORD**

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, March 29-30, 2005, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of Mountain Crest High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Blake Pickett is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Mountain Crest High School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at Mountain Crest High School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D.  
State Superintendent  
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# **MOUNTAIN CREST HIGH SCHOOL**

## **ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF**

### **School Administration**

Blake Pickett ..... Principal  
Kevan Kennington ..... Assistant Principal  
Maria Nielsen ..... Assistant Principal

### **Counseling**

Kris Hart ..... Counselor  
Dave Clark ..... Counselor  
Kris Evans ..... Counselor  
Lanette Hansen ..... Counselor

### **Support Staff**

Patrick Allred	Tonya Jewell	Hal Olsen
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Tyrel Anderson	Gay Leishman	Rebecca Olson
Jason Baxter	Chad Lindley	Angie Pedersen
Shannon Boehme	Cindy Lundskog	Ronna Richardson
David Gentry	Lonnie Mangum	Arlene Saunders
Mel Glad	Jasen Maughan	Jackie Schenk
Debbie Hamilton	Brandon Mayers	Stephanie Smart
Debbie Hansen	Mike Mayers	Peggy Smith
Lora Hendrickson	Sharon Mayers	Monica Thompson
Brenda Howard	Steffanie Miller	Marcia Todd
Bret Jenson	Matt Morris	Laurie Zillies
Cassandra Jenson	Cory Nielsen	Shauna Zook
Gloria Jenson	Debbie Nielsen	

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Artus Amundsen	Steven Bentley	April Cooper
Jeremy Baer	Ray Brazier	Amanie Crosbie
Joan Baldwin	Arlene Churchill	Jim Crosbie

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Jane DeByle  
Brian Eves  
Allison Feinauer  
Todd Fenton  
Will Francis  
Melissa Garside  
Rich Gittins  
Greg Hamilton  
Brett Hansen  
Lanette Hansen  
Steve Hansen  
Kaye Lyn Harris  
Kirk Hillyard  
Sue Hodgkinson  
Stacie Hofmeister  
Brent Jeppesen  
Sam Jones

Lori Karaghoulis  
Mary Kirby  
Mike Kirby  
Richard Lamb  
Kate Lamoreaux  
Alana Lange  
Ruth Leishman  
Larry Litizzette  
Alan MacQueen  
Julie Major  
Brent McMillan  
Rebecca Messer  
Ruth Morgan  
Mike Nath  
Keith Nelson  
Margaret O'Bray  
Jack O'Neill  
Laura Peterson

Jerry Skidmore  
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Randy Stacey  
Anthony Stewart  
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Meagan Thunell  
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Steve Webb  
Maurice Wiberg  
Suzanne Wilson  
Teresa Wilson  
Mark Wootten  
Paula Zsiray



# **MOUNTAIN CREST HIGH SCHOOL**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Where all are valued, educated and encouraged to serve.

## **BELIEF STATEMENTS**

### **Students are Valued**

- Each student is a valued individual with unique physical, social, emotional and intellectual needs.
- A student's self-esteem is enhanced by positive relationships and mutual respect among and between students and staff.
- A safe and physically comfortable environment promotes student learning.

### **Students are Educated**

- Students will demonstrate their understanding of essential knowledge and skills, solve problems and produce quality work.
- Students will apply their learning in meaningful context.
- Students learn best when they are actively involved in the learning process.
- Students will become confident, self-directed lifelong learners.

### **Students are Encouraged to Serve**

- Students, teachers, administrators, parents and the community share the responsibility for advancing the school mission statement.
- Students will be provided the opportunity and encouraged to serve in the school, community and nation.

## **MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM**

Doug Finch, Lone Peak High School, Alpine School District,  
Visiting Team Chairperson

Mike Smith, Copper Hills High School, Jordan School District

Joyce Smart, Logan High School, Logan City School District

William Gillespie, Orem High School, Alpine School District

George Miller, Utah State Office of Education

**VISITING TEAM REPORT**  
**MOUNTAIN CREST HIGH SCHOOL**

**CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE**

Mountain Crest High School is located in the rural northern Utah community of Hyrum in beautiful Cache Valley. The school opened in 1983 and is part of the Cache County School District. In 2004-5, 1,391 students are enrolled in grades 10-12. The Mountain Crest High School attendance area consists primarily of middle-class wage earners from the sectors of agriculture, livestock/cattle, small businesses, large firms, higher education, and governmental agencies.

a) *What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?*

Asian, Black and Caucasian students (94 percent of the student population) have an average GPA of 3.16, while Hispanic, Native American and Pacific Islanders (six percent of student population) have an average GPA of 2.16. In 2003, 29 percent of minority students did not graduate, compared to seven percent of Caucasian students, and in 2004, 36 percent of minority students did not graduate compared to seven percent of Caucasian students.

Criterion-referenced test scores have stayed consistent at Mountain Crest High School for the past five years. The school's improvement plan for 2004-05 is to decrease the percentage of students who are in the minimal and partial mastery categories of elementary algebra (specific data was not available in school report). Mountain Crest High school did not make AYP for the 2003-04 year in the area of academic achievement score for the students with disabilities subgroup in Language Arts. This is the second year in a row that Mountain Crest High did not make AYP.

Nineteen percent of Mountain Crest students take some type of an AP exam, and sixty-seven percent passed these exams in 2004. The number of students taking AP exams has fluctuated for the past three years from 211, to 295, to 270 students. Ninety-seven percent of students enrolled in concurrent enrollment classes earn college credit at Mountain Crest High School, and enrollment has increased to of 1,200 total students enrolled over the past three years.

Survey data indicated that parents, faculty, and students feel safe at school. However, additional inquiry suggested these same groups feel that improvements in school-wide discipline and supervision, as well as ongoing staff training in student behavior management, would be beneficial.

- b) *What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?*

It is not clear that the school was able to identify in its analysis of the profile data many achievement gaps and, specifically, which students are learning and which students are not. The Visiting Team recommends further disaggregation of the performance data by specific subgroups, sub-scores for the department and focus group analyses, and recommendations for school improvement action plans. Existing school analysis notes generalized conclusions for students who do not learn, such as difficulty with reading, disengagement, attendance problems, self-esteem issues, low parental support, and other outside barriers that are not substantiated by data found in the profile. These generalized factors are uncontrollable factors for school personnel to actively address.

The summaries of the data contained in the profile do not fully address the major implications of the data for school improvement planning purposes. Student performance areas noted above are areas for which further inquiry and additional analysis could yield more specific causes for achievement gaps, and ascertain ownership of the action plans by department and focus group members.

**Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:**

- Investigate graduation and dropout causes for minority students.
- Gather information on specific performance by concept in geometry and elementary algebra.
- Gather information on specific performance by concept in language arts by students with disabilities.

**CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS**

- a) *To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?*

The Mountain Crest community is to be commended for the engagement of staff, parents, and students in the collaborative self-study process, particularly considering the recent changes in the majority of the school's administration. The School Community Council members have been actively involved in the development the school profile, participating in focus groups and finalizing the intent and wording of the action plans. Students have also given input in focus

group work and can articulate the intent and aims of the school's mission and belief statements.

- b) *To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?*

Mountain Crest has considered a variety of data sources to determine the school's current strengths and limitations. However, the school improvement team and staff are still emerging in their ability to consider the implications of some of the data contained in the school's profile for the development of the school improvement plan.

### **CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

Mountain Crest High School's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are as follows:

1. Learning to learn
  - Students will graduate with the skills to succeed in the Twenty-First Century.
2. Expanding and integrating knowledge
  - Students will explore a variety of disciplines, develop life skills, and gain career preparation.
3. Communication
  - Students will demonstrate effective communication skills.
4. Thinking and reasoning skills
  - Students will think analytically, critically and creatively.
5. Personal and social responsibility
  - Students will accept responsibility for their daily decisions.

#### **Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:**

- a) *To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?*

The process of developing the school mission was clearly collaborative, with contributions from administration, staff, parents, and students. The process of editing and revision was open and available for continuous input from the entire educational community. The resulting product is a concise and focused mission statement that resounds with the desires of all stakeholders.

- b) *To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?*

Mountain Crest's belief statements are comprehensive and represent the core values of the school. These statements are clearly related to the mission statement, with each part of the mission followed by supportive belief statements.

Since belief statements represent principles that are intended to guide educational practices, the Visiting Team suggests that the belief statements be extended to reflect the expectations and responsibility of administrators and teachers in addressing the needs of students. Stating "students will..." misses an opportunity to express how teachers and administrators will hold themselves accountable for student learning.

- c) *To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?*

The school's goals directly address priorities for improving student learning. In their entirety, the mission statement, belief statements, and DRSLs are a clearly articulated and cohesive guideline for improving student learning and organizational effectiveness. The collaborative process used to develop Mountain Crest High's mission, beliefs, and DRSLs is beautifully evident. Students feel a sense of buy-in to the process and sought out members of the Visiting Team to share their views. This shared interest illustrates the feeling of responsibility felt by students for the school and its success.

The school's DRSLs are measurable, sufficiently challenging, and attainable within a reasonable time frame. A next step should be to develop performance indicators for reaching the goals. The school's strong history of use of focus groups and collaborative effort could be used as an effective tool in designing an assessment system in order to assess whether or not students are reaching the school-wide desired results.

### **Curriculum Development:**

- a) *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?*

Mountain Crest High School is staffed by dedicated, caring, and very qualified individuals. They are committed to the school and to the profession, and have worked with each other long enough that a good trust level exists within the various departments and across the departments. Their schedule of early faculty meetings on Fridays has given them an opportunity to have regular department

meetings. In those meetings, approximately 75 percent of the time is allocated to curriculum issues. There is a commitment across the school to utilize the State Core standards and keep their instruction aligned with state and/or national standards.

The strength of collaborative curriculum development lies within the departments of Mountain Crest. Each department utilizes what time it has to plan curriculum and share it among the members of the department. The Social Studies Department spent considerable time in the past two years adopting and refining the newly mandated Government and Citizenship course. Its members reviewed the standards, selected an appropriate book, and helped those assigned to teach the class to align their instruction with each other. The English Department has been working on improving the writing of the students for the past three years. English teachers used the Trust Lands Grant money to create a new writing class and made sacrifices to make it work at the school. They have worked within their department to get everyone up to speed on the Six Traits writing rubric, and feel comfortable enough now to take it to the entire staff. The Science Department is a model of collaboration—its members meet daily over lunch, and have developed a great working relationship where curriculum sharing is common. The Business Department, which shares classrooms and computer labs, has a common office where teachers can discuss and collaborate on a daily level. Nearly all departments are grouped geographically within the building, encouraging sharing and collaboration.

Although there has been some limited and individual work done in cross-departmental collaboration, this stands as a goal of the future for Mountain Crest High. The Special Education Department and the ESL teachers have led the way, and have worked extensively with teachers from the various departments to gain an understanding of the required curriculum and help remediate their students, re-teaching if necessary to ensure that the students understand the curriculum. A computer class assigns its students to create and maintain web pages for faculty, resulting in some cross-department correlation. Some teachers have recognized the need to inject more writing into their classes, and others have co-taught between departments and even with the feeder school.

The Visiting Team encourages continued cross-departmental collaboration, and encourages the staff members to explore other ways in which they can collaborate. The Visiting Team further hopes that the focus groups established for the accreditation process will be maintained and utilized to continue the discussion of school-wide collaboration.

- b) *To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?*

During the self-study process, the school's departments thought critically about their practices and analyzed what they were doing to positively affect student learning. Within individual classrooms, connections between the DRSLs and the lessons were sometimes expressed.

The Visiting Team feels that, while the effort and work thus far invested in school improvement are laudable, they need to be continued and expanded. Focus group work should continue, and departmental meetings should focus on explaining and understanding how the school incorporates its mission, beliefs, and stated desired results for student learning (DRSLs) in every classroom. The Visiting Team calls on the school through the study groups to further refine the learning outcomes so that they are recognizable, measurable, and applicable in every classroom and activity of the school. The Visiting Team further encourages the various departments at Mountain Crest to revisit their departmental goals and align them more closely with the school's DRSLs.

### **Quality Instructional Design:**

- a) *To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?*

Mountain Crest High School has effectively established a positive learning climate where instructional time is protected. Most classroom observations provided evidence of an emphasis on both students' achievement of essential knowledge and skills and higher-order thinking skills that require students to apply their learning in meaningful contexts. It was noted by students that engagement of students varied mostly due to interest levels and one's willingness to ask additional questions to clarify misunderstandings or close learning gaps. A number of management and organizational strategies, such as bell ringers and varied seating arrangements, are being utilized in most classrooms to maximize students' academic engagement time.

- b) *To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?*

A number of instructional strategies were named in conversation with school community members, and are evident in classroom observations. These strategies include alternative presentations, integration among departments, kinesthetic activities, individual hands-on lab opportunities, unit outlines with flexible deadlines, co-constructive teaching, peer review, peer tutoring, and service learning.

- c) *To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?*



Students are provided on a consistent basis with a variety of opportunities to receive additional assistance to improve their learning. The weekly remediation time built into the schedule on Tuesday mornings was noted as a valued opportunity to receive additional learning supports, as well as access to teachers by many students interviewed by the Visiting Team. An ESL Department is emerging as a viable entity working to meet the needs of the growing minority population and to deal with social and academic gaps in achievement and inclusion. The after-school REACH program is being utilized by students to remediate credit deficits and areas of weakness identified on the UBSCT exam. A Life Management course is utilized to connect “at-risk” students with peer support. After-school EDNET and distance learning are available in the building to facilitate adult diplomas and accelerated educational opportunities.

### **Quality Assessment Systems:**

- a) *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*

Mountain Crest’s development of individual classroom assessments is based on the teachers’ definition of the type of achievement to be assessed and the performance standards for evaluating the quality of students’ achievement. Evidences include description of expectations on disclosure statements, classroom accountability displayed as goals and desired outcomes on boards, etc.

Mountain Crest High School’s expectations for student achievement and performance on state and federal assessments is clearly defined. The school is continuing to select school-wide assessments that are relevant and pertinent to school-wide desired outcomes, as evidenced by the reading assessment given to all students. Members of each department are continuing to collaborate on the specific expectations of learning for each student within the same course.

It is suggested that Mountain Crest High School create clearly articulated school-wide assessment instruments in order to measure school goals and objectives (DRSLs).

- b) *To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?*

Mountain Crest High has identified some of the information needs of a few types of decision makers who use assessment results, as evidenced by the administration sharing state and federal assessment results with departments.

The purpose of individual classroom assessments of student learning is clearly defined and effectively communicated to students prior to the assessment, as

evidenced by Visiting Team classroom visits and communication with students and teachers.

Most assessments at Mountain Crest High are directly linked to specific instructional uses that promote student learning and continuous improvement, as evidenced by the assessment focus group report and individual classroom visits. The interpretation of assessment results is consistent with the purpose of each assessment.

The selection of the method of assessing student learning was varied and based on the type of learning to be assessed, the specific performance standards for evaluating student achievement, and the purpose of the assessment.

The school generally utilizes assessments that adequately cover the intended range of essential knowledge and skills to be assessed, as decided upon by individual teachers. Also, the students are provided with additional opportunities to demonstrate their learning beyond the initial assessment.

- c) *To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?*

Mountain Crest High's assessments are fair and equitable. Performance standards and criteria for judging student performance are established and shared with students in advance of the assessment, as evidenced by classroom visits, teacher and student communication, and the assessment focus group report.

### **Leadership for School Improvement:**

- a) *To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?*

Mountain Crest High School has established an academic learning climate in which teaching and learning are supported. Students note that they value the care and personal connections they make with school staff members. Most of the students and staff members feel valued and important as their accomplishments and major life activities are acknowledged on a periodic basis.

- b) *To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?*

The decision-making process is generally collaborative and ensures consistency with the school's beliefs, mission, and goals. Some of the decisions made by the school are based on validated, research-based practices and the analysis of pertinent data and information.

- c) *To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?*

The school has specifically determined some of the resources, timelines, and responsibilities for implementing the action steps of the school improvement plans. Mountain Crest is working to more clearly identify essential knowledge and skills in every curriculum area and to then monitor student progress. The school is thus emerging in systematically utilizing assessment and evaluation data for the purpose of improving student learning and instructional effectiveness.

- d) *To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?*

Most of the school-wide policies and operational procedures are consistent with the school's beliefs and mission, and are designed to maximize opportunities for successful learning. School maintenance personnel are working to utilize teaming techniques to keep the building clean and in general good upkeep, and to maintain open channels of communication with the school leadership to address negative maintenance perceptions.

- e) *To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?*

The allocation and use of resources such as School Trust Lands money and teacher time are aligned with the school's goals to support student learning and facilitate teacher collaboration (e.g., remediation and collaboration time built into schedule).

- f) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?*

Mountain Crest High School invites and engages the school community as partners in the learning process. The school builds collaborative networks of support with community members and groups as the building serves as a gathering point for community events and activities.

### **Community Building:**

- a) *To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?*

The Visiting Team observed that the school administration, teachers, students, and community have developed an effective school community and learning environment. Students commented to the Visiting Team that they feel a part of the school and that they are safe.

The Visiting Team observed the very active role that the community at large plays in the life of Mountain Crest High School. The school actively engages parents, families, businesses, and volunteers in the learning process through a variety of programs. Mentors, student teachers, and interns from Utah State University are involved in working with the high school students in many capacities. The school actively supports and maintains these productive links with larger academic community.

A Parent Scholarship team visits Mountain Crest High School seniors on an individual basis to provide assistance and information regarding scholarships and college opportunities after graduation.

The Visiting Team noted that the Community Improvement Council and the Booster clubs involve over 650 parents and families in direct student support for curricular and extracurricular offerings in the school environment.

Collaborative and interdependent, focus groups and the community work together quite well to provide a learning environment that nurtures a sense of caring and belonging.

*b) To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?*

The school engages parents and the community to establish good working relationships across K-16 levels of education. Excellent examples of this were noted in five areas:

1) The swimming pool is accessible to the local community, elementary schools, scout groups, and senior citizens. High school students have the opportunity to be involved as lifeguards, earning a WSI certificate and CPR training, and learning how to serve others in service learning opportunities.

2) The adult education program allows the adult community to earn a GED.

3) Opportunities to earn college credit at Mountain Crest High School include the 26 AP and 25 concurrent enrollment programs from Utah State University and Weber State University. The AP program routinely has a 67 percent passing rate. The concurrent enrollment program has provided over 1,600 student offerings (individual students may take two, three, or more CE classes in a day). It was noted that 97 percent of the concurrent Enrollment students are passing their CE

classes. Last year three students earned their associate's degrees, and a dozen or more are expected to do so this year.

4) The EDNET distance learning network has been established at Mountain Crest High School for over 10 years, and allows some of the concurrent enrollment offerings. Most CE classes are taught locally (on-site) by 16 Mountain Crest faculty members who have master's degrees and work with Utah State University or Weber State University. The EDNET system also allows an ACT preparation class to be received from nearby Skyview High School.

5) The Bridgerland Applied Technology College has allowed over 340 students to participate in Career and Technical Education classes this year. These networks are good examples of extending the school community beyond the walls of the school and allowing students opportunities for additional education and service not typically found in some schools today. It is also a good example of utilizing resources carefully for the benefit of students to that they can earn high school and college credit from a variety of places.

### **Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:**

- a) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

The school's organizational structure is adequate and supportive of school improvement. Mechanisms are in place—and have been for the last ten years—that allow teachers to participate in at least weekly professional development and faculty meetings. Professional development should be based upon the needs of the faculty. Examples may include integrating technology in the classrooms, using formative and summative assessment practices to determine student-learning outcomes, data-driven decision-making, and UTIPS Online Assessment tools, to name a few.

- b) *To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?*

The school has provided support for the work of teachers and other groups responsible for implementing improvement initiatives.

Sustaining and nurturing this process of continuous improvement should be given priority in the form of professional growth and development opportunities for the faculty. Focus groups and the School Improvement Council have worked well in the past to create and implement school improvements as needed by the school community.

## **CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI**

### **Standard I – Educational Program**

This standard is met. Mountain Crest High School's instructional and organizational practices, as well as its policies and procedures, support the desired results for student learning and prepare students to succeed in a culturally diverse, democratic society.

### **Standard II – Student Personnel Services**

This standard is met. Student personnel services are designed to give systematic assistance to students. The assigned personnel for guidance includes a minimum of one full-time person for each 400 students enrolled.

### **Standard III – School Plant and Equipment**

This standard is met. The school plant provides for a variety of instructional activities and programs, and incorporates aesthetic features that contribute to a positive educational atmosphere.

### **Standard IV – Library Media Program**

This standard is met. The school library media program is a primary resource for literacy, information, and curriculum support. A certified library media teacher provides instruction, resources, and activities to promote independent use of ideas and information.

### **Standard V – Records**

This standard is met. Student records are maintained, handled, and protected in the best interests of students and parents. Students and parents have the right to access personal student records and are ensured the privacy of such, as guaranteed by federal legislation.

### **Standard VI – School Improvement (This is addressed in the self-study.)**

This standard is met. The school improvement plan focuses on the total school rather than each of the separate components within the school.

### **Standard VII – Preparation of Personnel**

This standard is mostly met. Great improvement is noted, as only one teacher lacks certification or letter in compliance with the licensing requirements of the state of Utah and proper endorsements for the subjects assigned.

### **Standard VIII – Administration**

This standard is met. The administration of Mountain Crest High School provides educational leadership, supervises and coordinates programs, and carries out the necessary administrative procedures.

### **Standard IX – Teacher Load**

This standard is met. The total number of students instructed by any one teacher in any one grading period does not exceed numbers set by the Utah State Office of Education and/or Northwest.

### **Standard X – Activities**

This standard is met. Mountain Crest High School supports a range of activities that supplement the basic instructional program by providing additional interests and opportunities for learning to take place.

### **Standard XI – Business Practices**

This standard is met. The school is financially responsible. Proper budgetary procedures and generally accepted accounting principles are followed for all school funds. The school's advertising and promotional literature are completely truthful and ethical.

## **CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN**

- a) *To what extent is the school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?*

The five school-wide action plans address academic programs for all students, specific instructional strategies, utilization of student data, student behavior expectations, and service-oriented activities. The Visiting Team senses that the number and breadth of these action plans have left the school challenged in working strategically to adequately develop and focus resources on addressing the critical areas identified. Only one specific academic critical need was noted, in Elementary Algebra.

- b) *To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?*

The school community expresses deep commitment to the school action plan, as evidenced by the preparation for the site visit despite the recent change in school leadership. In particular, the School Community Council has expressed a commitment through its involvement and engagement in the self-study process to continue conversations and commitment levels to participate in accomplishing the school action plans. Because of the gaps evident in the school profile analysis, leading to insufficiently developed action plans, the Visiting Team is concerned about Mountain Crest having a clear target for school improvement that is strategic in affecting student learning and follow-up process to sustain long-term commitment.

- c) *How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the school-wide action plan appear to be?*

The plan for evaluating the effectiveness of the school improvement plan is incomplete, as some goals are not fully or clearly developed into measurable, cohesive steps with intended outcomes benchmarked.

## **CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM**

### **Commendations:**

- The Visiting Team commends the exemplary collaborative process that was utilized to develop clear, concise, and compelling mission and belief statements involving all stakeholders. The mission and belief statement reflect a responsible and courageous approach to the stewardship of educators by including carefully selected words such as “valued,” “educated,” “service,” and, most importantly, “all.”
- The Visiting Team commends the faculty and staff for a welcoming, safe, educational environment at Mountain Crest High School. The Visiting Team saw evidence of powerful teaching and high academic achievement by many students. Staff members demonstrated the value of close interpersonal relationships, sensitivity to learning styles, emphasis on higher-order thinking, and flexibility toward students with special needs. Many students commented to the Visiting Team that they like their teachers and feel they are getting a good education at Mountain Crest High School. Students said they could easily go to a counselor or teacher if they needed to talk about a problem.



- The Visiting Team commends the community involvement at Mountain Crest High School. Several staff members noted that students and staff are actively involved in community service both in and outside of the school. Service learning opportunities are being created. Community members by the hundreds were noted to be serving the school in a variety of capacities.

### **Recommendations:**

- With a powerful mission statement, the Visiting Team extends the challenge to truly “walk the walk.” The standard that Mountain Crest High School has raised compels the school to further enhance the academic climate from one of invitational learning opportunities exclusive of subgroups of students to an environment with expectations that **all** students can and will learn essential outcomes.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Mountain Crest High School continue to utilize student data through existing and developed assessments to identify achievement gaps and specific students not learning. This process will further validate and perpetuate current powerful instructional practices, and help develop a specific needs assessment for professional development. This process will further focus, empower, and give all stakeholders ownership of the school’s improvement efforts (such as refined action plans).
- The Visiting Team recommends a “needs-driven” professional development strategy be implemented to serve the teachers and continue the advances made during the accreditation process. The Visiting Team noted that previous professional development activities have been sporadic and not necessarily geared to the needs of the faculty. The Visiting Team also noted that past technical training and other professional development has been offered by the district office staff, which may or may not be adequately assessing the local needs of the Mountain Crest faculty.